

# Laura Clifton Byrne

San Francisco, California

Photography

Thesis Advisor: Tanya Marcuse

## A Photographic Exploration of Human Fragility as Expressed in Nature.

What interests me as a photographer is the presence and absence of people in a given place; a suggestion of our past existence, our residue. The strange rural places surrounding the Hudson Valley attract me visually and intellectually – there is a certain eeriness and familiarity about fallow land. The clear cut, untilled and overgrown fields are physically absent of people and yet there is a sense that people exist or have existed there previously. There is history. What fascinates me is how a place can feel so full and so empty at the same time.



I am using both small and large format to encourage maximum creative flexibility. The conceptual underpinning of this project supports the production of several series of eight to twelve photographs apiece. For scheduling I am adopting the program Laura Gail Tyler taught in Beyond 35mm, which was expose two rolls of 35mm, or twelve large format negatives and make at least three prints weekly. I am currently taking Photographic Concepts, which provides peer critique, essential to having a solid series of images.

The culmination of this project will ideally be an exhibition in the spring, a written component and an artist book. The written component will include technical notes, a discussion of central artistic and intellectual influences, and a further explanation of my work. In the spring I plan on taking Arthur Hillman's Artist Book class, which will enable me to construct a book while working closely with him and continuing to receive regular peer critique. An example of what I would like to do can be found in Adam Fuss' My Ghost, a book that thrills me. The combination of photography, poetry and design communicates a spirituality that goes beyond intellectual comprehension. My goal with this project is to observe and reflect, to express through photographs and to put into words this relationship we have with the land, what we make of it and what we leave behind: our transitoriness as humans at odds with our environs.